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AEPAC Statement – Secretary Blinken Must Prove the USA’s Support for the Ethiopian People

As US Secretary of State Antony Blinken undertakes his visit to Ethiopia, the American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee has issued the following statement:

“As Secretary Blinken heads to Ethiopia, AEPAC calls on him and his team to focus on supporting the Ethiopian people at this critical time in their history. Sustainable peace and security can only be achieved when citizens’ rights are respected and the rule of law is applied justly.

“We must also be fully committed to helping communities that are facing the daunting task of rebuilding their lives, post-conflict reconstruction, and enabling businesses and industries to grow so they can provide jobs and livelihoods to revitalize the nation.

“None of this can happen, however, while the TPLF continues to breach the Pretoria peace agreement signed on 2 November 2022; and while Ethiopia remains in the grip of multiple humanitarian crises – including the suffering of millions of internally displaced people, most notably those displaced by ethnic attacks in Western Oromia and victims of forced evictions from around Addis Ababa, the ongoing drought in Borena and around several other parts of the country, the escalating ethnic-based violence and the widespread crackdown on civil rights as reported by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has exacerbated the problem.

“With the US-Ethiopian relationship entering a period of renewal, AEPAC believes that the US Government should seek to use its influence to advance shared human rights values of democracy, the rule of law, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and free movement.

“This values-based policy should be paired with support for Ethiopian businesses and citizens as they rebuild the country, including readmission to AGOA. The renewed US-Ethiopia partnership, which should be based on the US-Africa 21st-century partnership platform, must firmly stand against all corrupt ethnocentric organizations such as TPLF and OLF-Shene. Both are labeled as terrorist organizations by the Ethiopian Parliament.

“It is also critically important that both the TPLF and the Federal Government of Ethiopia must be held accountable to the Pretoria agreement. There are credible reports indicating the TPLF has not fully disarmed and the Federal Government has not yet fully reestablished authority in all of the Tigray region, including the capital Mekelle.

“Further, the central element of the Pretoria agreement, to establish an interim regional administration in Tigray, has been overtaken by the TPLF. All signs indicate the TPLF is back to its old tricks of being intolerant toward any internal opposition. The TPLF officials are showing that the devastating war has taught them nothing.

“The USA cannot advocate for human rights on one hand and make efforts to save and accommodate the worst human rights offenders on the other. Following the devastating conflict in Ethiopia, the USA must be on the side of the Ethiopian people. This will demonstrate to the world that the US-Africa 21st-century partnership is real.”

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About AEPAC

The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee is dedicated to promoting a positive, synergetic relationship between the United States and Ethiopia. AEPAC’s core mission is to strengthen and enhance the century-old relationship between the United States and Ethiopia. AEPAC strives to build a strong partnership based on the common interests and mutual benefits of the two countries.

More information on our work can be found here: <https://aepact.org/>